

HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY! Did you know the origin of Uncle Sam probably began in 1812, when Samuel Wilson was a meat packer who provided meat to the US Army? The meat shipments were stamped with the initials, U.S. Someone joked that the initials stood for "Uncle Sam." This joke led to the idea of Uncle Sam symbolizing the United States government.

GAZEBOEXPRESS



YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENT SOURCE FOR THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND • JULY 2012

HOMETOWN HEROES

Melissa Brouwer was just five weeks into her new life as a first-time mother of triplets when the unthinkable happened – baby Reese turned ashen and stopped breathing. The date was Sept. 7. Brouwer remembers it like it was yesterday.

"When I buckled Reese into his car seat, his color changed. His eyes got really big and we realized he wasn't breathing," she said. "We called 9-1-1 and I started CPR. I did everything I was supposed to do but he just became limp."

Highland Patrolman Brad Snow was on the scene in minutes. He knew the situation was dire when he took over performing CPR. Officer Jerry Koedyker was right behind.

"Brad realized that something was blocking his airway. He turned him over and did the only thing he knew; he hit him firmly on the back. That did it. Reese started breathing."

Police escorted the ambulance to Community



TRIPLE THREAT: Minor cases of acid reflux were found in the other two boys and today, Aiden, Reese and Noah and are approaching their first birthdays as happy, healthy babies. [PHOTO PROVIDED]

Hospital in Munster. The infant was transferred to Comer Children's Hospital, where he joined Noah, the tiniest of the triplets, as a patient. Acid reflux and a malformation where the esophagus meets the stomach was found. Surgery followed.

Brouwer shudders when she considers what could have happened. "The doctors told us Reese would have died without the quick action of Highland police," she said. "I can never thank them enough for saving our son." 🐦

WWII VETERANS HONORED IN WASHINGTON

Lee Sleeman and two of his closest friends were treated to a day in Washington June 19 as part of an elite Honor Flight dedicated to veterans.

It was a day that began at 5 a.m. at Midway Airport and ended 17 hours later creating memories Sleeman said he will never forget.

"There were 90 of us on the Chicago flight and they hailed from every branch of the military," said Sleeman, as he reminisced about the trip with his fellow Army veterans Tom Mulligan, of Griffith, and George Griner, who lived in Highland before moving to Schererville.

Every veteran who travels with Honor Flight is escorted to our nation's capital and taken on a tour of the war memorials with all the trimmings. WWII veterans are given priority, but Honor Flight plans to include Korean and Vietnam vets.



HONOR FLIGHT: Lee Sleeman, Tom Mulligan and George Griner traveled to Washington with the Honor Flight, dedicated to WWII veterans. [PHOTO PROVIDED]

"We were the 23rd flight out of Chicago," he said. "We were told there have been 1,500 applicants for the trip. They had Honor Flight guardians for us while we were in Chicago and Washington, who took care of anything we needed." 🐦

INFO: For info or to apply for an upcoming flight, visit www.honorflight.org or call (937) 521-2400.

BUILDING DEMOLITION

The long-vacant Finke's nightclub on Kennedy Avenue is slated to come tumbling down as is the former Chela's restaurant on 45th Avenue. Town Council President Bernie Zemen said the processes involved with acquiring and demolishing buildings that have outlived their useful life takes time. "It's a perfect time for these properties to begin a new chapter," Zemen said. "We're eager to attract new businesses to Highland and breathe new life into these popular locations."

CULVER'S ON SCHEDULE

The owners of a planned Culver's have acquired a permit to demolish the former Shell gas station at Ridge Road and Cline Avenue. Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro said plans are on schedule to begin construction on the restaurant's newest franchise this fall.

BECERRA ON THE MOVE

Congratulations to resident Maria Becerra, the long-time executive director of the Hammond Housing Authority, who has been tapped by East Chicago to be the city's next redevelopment director. In that role, Becerra will be responsible for managing East Chicago's tax increment financing districts, federal development funding as well as revitalization projects throughout the city.

HAZARDOUS WASTE DAY

To make your environment safer, the town will collect batteries, household cleaners, oils, paints, solvents, poisons, pesticides, anti-freeze, gasoline, mercury thermometers, thermostats and fluorescent bulbs. Items not accepted include tires, appliances, ammunition, medical/biological waste, explosives, radioactive wastes, asbestos, 30-gallon or larger containers.

WHEN: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. **JULY 28**

WHERE: Highland Public Works

INFO: Call (219) 972-5083.

INFLUENTIAL WOMAN

Congratulations to Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro, who has been named the region's most influential woman in economic development.

Petro received the award May 31 at the Influential Women of Northwest Indiana Awards banquet at the Star Plaza in Merrillville. The award recognizes Petro's accomplishments as the town's redevelopment director, including working to provide the underpinnings of the town's Riverfront Development District, Main Street Commission and her efforts to bring a variety of new businesses to Highland.

CRIME WATCH MEETING

Learn about recent crime trends at this month's neighborhood meeting.

WHEN: 6:30 p.m. **JULY 11**

WHERE: Highland Library

RESERVATIONS: Call Officer Shawn Anderson at (219) 838-3184 or email sanderson@highland.in.gov.



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NEWS TIP? STORY IDEA?

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HIGHLAND RESIDENT TURNS PASSION FOR TORTILLAS INTO LOCAL BUSINESS

Fernando Gutierrez was eyeing his career options when he decided to follow his craving -- for a fresh tortilla that could be cooked to order.

Six months later, he has turned that passion for gourmet tortillas into a bona fide business close to his Highland home.

"Whenever I would go to Mexico, I would freeze and bring back 30 packages of these tortillas, but try as I might, I could never get local stores to carry them," the married father of three said. "When I was laid off from my job as a dental assistant, I knew I wanted to start my own business. I consulted with the people from the Northwest Indiana Small Business Development Center and they agreed that a fresh tortilla business was the way to go."

Crash courses in running a business and safe food handling followed and with that, Torti Products was born.

ABOUT TORTI PRODUCTS

The company makes raw flour tortillas that are ready to cook for a fresh, homemade taste.

WHERE TO BUY: 8000 Kennedy Ave., Highland
INFO: E-mail tortiproducs@gmail.com or call (219) 730-2071.

In seven short months, Gutierrez negotiated a lenient lease for a storefront at 8000 Kennedy Ave. and secured contracts with nearly two dozen retail grocers, the most recent being Cermak Produce in Chicago. The store also caters to locals, who can pick up 15 fresh tortillas for \$2.50.

"I make tortillas the way I remember them," he said. "I'm very excited at how well the business is doing and can't wait to help it grow even faster. I wish I would have started this business when I was 30. There is so much to learn. But, I am grateful I am able to do it now." 🐦

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR TOWN LEADERS: JOHN BACH

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR BIG ON HIGHLAND PRIDE AND MAKING PEOPLE'S LIVES EASIER

Public Works Director John Bach got the calling of his lifetime in the town he calls home.

"Ron Bradley, the former public works director, took me under his wing and showed me what his job was all about. It's something you can't possibly understand at age 19 without the help and guidance of someone with more life experience," Bach recalled. "It was then that I figured out what I wanted to do with my life and began focusing my college courses to meet the requirements of the job."

Armed with a degree in construction management and civil engineering technology, Bach was named assistant town engineer in 1987, a position that allowed him to work closely with his mentor, before accepting a position two years later with neighboring Griffith.

It would be only two more years before opportunity would come knocking again -- this time for a position as Highland's director of public works. More than two decades later, Bach still loves his job.

ABOUT HIGHLAND PUBLIC WORKS

Public Works is a broad term that encompasses the operation and maintenance of every street -- from managing the garbage contract and picking up brush and leaves, to plowing, paving and patching roads. Public Works also is responsible for everything you can't see -- including water lines, sanitary and storm sewers.

As public works director, sanitary district superintendent and water utility superintendent, Bach oversees 36 full-time employees, a workforce that swells by a dozen each summer.

"What I love about this job is the ability I have to help make improvements that make people's lives a little easier and them a little prouder of Highland," he said. "I have overseen projects on every major road -- Ridge, Kennedy, Cline, Main and 45th -- but I think I like the neighborhood improvement projects best. I have had the great fortune of having the support of each of the town councils. They have given me the latitude to do my job, trusting me to get the job done." 🐦



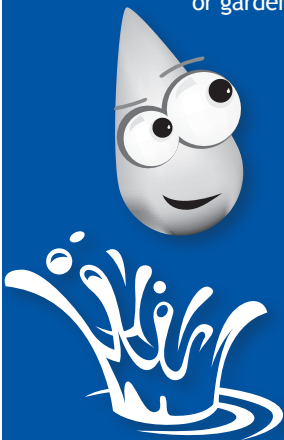
HARVESTING RAINWATER

THE BENEFITS

We get about 40 inches of precipitation annually in Highland.

You can expect to collect about 600 gallons of rainwater every time a storm dumps one inch of rain on a 1,000 square foot roof.

It takes about a half gallon of water per square foot of grass to sprinkle a lawn – which means that those 600 gallons of rainwater that fell last week could be caught and used to water 1,200 square feet of grass or garden.



It goes by the trendy moniker – rainwater harvesting. Sanitary Board President Rex Burton calls the collection and storage of rainwater for use on gardens and lawns a responsible and smart way to protect the environment.

At the same time, initiating a water-conservation system – home by home – could eliminate tens of millions of gallons of water from overwhelming the storm and sanitary sewers after a moderate-to-heavy rainfall while reducing the burden on your home's foundation and consumption at the tap.

Burton said the practice of collecting rainwater for future use has particular applications this year, when rainfall has been sparse and grass, flowers and trees are already showing the effects.

Most northern Indiana counties – including Lake – are suffering from severe drought and the forecast for July is more of the same; above normal temperatures and below-normal precipitation.

“When these conditions occur, it becomes increasingly difficult for rainwater to penetrate dry soils,” Burton said. “It makes a lot of sense to install a rainwater collection system at the downspouts when it can be used following a rainfall to replenish plants and soils.”

Everything you need to successfully harvest rainwater is available at your local home-improvement store.

Thomas Mordaunt, of Gus Bock Ace Hardware in Munster, said the popularity of simple rain barrels, which collect stormwater and keep mosquitoes and their larvae out, has grown.

“There are very expensive systems out there, but a good rain barrel collection system costs between \$75 and \$100,” Mordaunt said. “Because they are in demand, additional manufacturers have become involved in this product, which has helped to bring the price down.” ☺

DON'T FEED THE STRAYS

The town's feral cat population is booming and Police Chief Pete Hojnicky is asking for the public's help as police and animal control round up strays.

“The town has an ordinance in place that makes it a violation to feed stray animals,” Hojnicky said. “We have a problem, which we are seeking to remedy but it makes our job more difficult if the animals are being fed. It's not good for the animals to have to fend for themselves in the wild. They get hit by cars and can be preyed upon by other animals.”

Homeless cats picked up by animal control will be taken to the Humane Society of Northwest Indiana, which is a no-kill shelter.

CALLING ALL ARTISANS

The Main Street Commission is looking for artisans interested in selling their work at the town's first ever Christkindl Market in November and December. A handful of individuals have already volunteered to help stage the event.

INFO: If you are an artisan or would like to volunteer, please call Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro at (219) 972-7598.

E-DAY NOMINATIONS

The Northwest Indiana Small Business Development Center (SBDC) is accepting nominations for the 21st Annual Entrepreneurial Excellence, or E-Day, Awards. Categories include: Small Business Person of the Year, Entrepreneurial Success, Small Business Advocate, Small Business Exporter, Young Entrepreneur, Minority or Woman Owned Business, Emerging Small Business, Small Business Journalist and Family Owned Business of the Year. The deadline to nominate is Sept. 7.

INFO: For more information or to learn more about the nomination process, visit www.edayleaders.com or call the SBDC at (219) 644-3513.

STREET MARKET

Support local businesses and enjoy the warm summer weather at the annual street market featuring local produce and artisanal goods.

WHEN: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays

DATES: Now through Oct. 20

WHERE: Main Square Park

INFO: Visit www.highlandparks.org or call (219) 838-0114.

3V3 SOCCER TOURNEY

Come out and cheer on your favorite players — U8 to U19 — as they compete in the Highland Soccer Club's 19th annual 3V3 tournament.

WHEN: 9 a.m. **JULY 14** (rain date is July 15)

WHERE: Sharp Athletic Complex

INFO: Visit www.highlandsoccer.org or contact tournament director Jeff DeVries via email at 3v3@highlandsoccer.org or (219) 746-2621.

KID'S FISHING CONTEST

Boys and girls are invited to come out to Meadows Park Pond and enjoy a morning of fishing activities. Contestants will participate in a catch-and-release fishing tournament and casting contest. Prizes will be given out to the winners of each event. Bring your own fishing pole, hooks and bobbers. Bait will be provided.

WHEN: 8 to 10 a.m. **JULY 21**

WHERE: Meadows Park Pond

AGES: 6 to 13 year olds

FEE: \$7 for residents and \$10 for nonresidents.
INFO: Visit www.highlandparks.org or call (219) 838-0114.

NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK PARTY

Join the Town of Highland's Police, Fire and Public Works departments for free hot dogs, hamburgers and lemonade. These service professionals will talk about their jobs and allow visitors to tour their vehicles.

WHEN: 6 p.m. **JULY 31**

WHERE: Sheppard Park

INFO: Visit www.highlandparks.org or call (219) 838-0114.

SOUNDS OF SUMMER

Highland Parks and North Township have each created a roster of summer outdoor concerts. Grab a comfy lawn chair and your favorite bug spray and get ready to head to the parks.

MAIN SQUARE PARK CONCERT SERIES

WHEN: 7 p.m.

WHERE: Main Square Park Gazebo

JULY 12: Dan Mateja & the Downtown Sound

JULY 19: Billy Joel & Elton John tribute

ADMISSION: Free

AGES: All ages

INFO: Visit www.highlandparks.org or call (219) 838-0114.

WICKER PARK CONCERT SERIES

WHERE: Wicker Park Social Center Gazebo

DOORS OPEN: 7 p.m.

SHOWTIME: 7:30 to 10:30 p.m.

JULY 12: Jason & the Haymakers

JULY 19: Trippin Billies

JULY 26: Heartless

AUG. 2: Dot Dot Dot

AUG. 8: History's End

SEPT. 13: Visions of Santana

ADMISSION: \$5

AGES: 21 and over

INFO: Visit www.wickermemorialpark.com or call (219) 838-3420.

FORE!

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE GOLF OUTING

Get ready to tee-off at the 2012 golf outing sponsored by the Highland and Griffith chambers of commerce.

WHEN: 11 a.m. registration/lunch, noon shotgun start, 4:30 p.m. dinner
JULY 20

WHERE: Wicker Park Golf Course

FEE: \$95 per person includes lunch, golf, cart, dinner and golf balls.

CONTESTS: \$25 cash prize at each hole; door prizes and cash payouts for first and second place teams.

INFO: Call (219) 923-3666.



JERRY HEDGES MEMORIAL GOLF OUTING

Join the Highland Gridiron Club for the 16th Annual Jerry Hedges Memorial Golf Outing and help fund a \$1,000 scholarship for a deserving Highland High School senior. Since tax dollars may not be used to fund athletic teams, groups such as the Gridiron Club have become vital to filling this void as well as encouraging community spirit.

WHEN: 11 a.m. registration, noon shotgun start **AUGUST 4**

WHERE: Wicker Park Golf Course

FEE: Scramble format is \$70 per person or \$280 per foursome and includes golf, cart, prizes, food and drink. Foursomes preferred, but individuals are welcome!

REGISTRATION: Deadline is **JULY 23**

INFO: Call Ryan Thomas (219) 455-3577, Mark Alvarado (708) 516-4948, Tom Crowel (219) 789-1965, Ernie Drake (219) 218-1795 or Tom Brankin (219) 793-4262.

COMMUNITY THEATER

Celebrating 31 years of summer theater at the Main Square Park Gazebo, Highland Community Theater presents two productions for families of all ages. Bring a comfy lawn chair or your favorite blanket for seating.

THE BARD IN THE PARK

His work has made a lasting impression on theatre and literature. Sit back and enjoy this introduction to Shakespeare.

WHERE: Main Square Park Gazebo

WHEN: 7 p.m. **JULY 28** and 3 p.m. **JULY 29**

ADMISSION: Free

AGES: All ages

INFO: Visit www.highlandparks.org for the concert line-up or call (219) 838-0114.

A CENTURY OF MUSIC

Enjoy this unique musical featuring your favorite tunes from 1920 to present.

WHERE: Main Square Park Gazebo

WHEN: 8 p.m. **AUGUST 2-4** and **AUGUST 9-11**

ADMISSION: Free

AGES: All ages

INFO: Visit www.highlandparks.org for the concert line-up or call (219) 838-0114.

HORMONE THERAPY

Learn about the benefits of plant-based human-identical hormones and how to work with your healthcare professional to determine your hormone levels and specific needs. Question-and-Answer session will follow seminar presented by V.J. Damasius, PharmD, of Vyto's Pharmacy in Highland and Hammond. Registration is required.

WHEN: 6 to 8 p.m. **JULY 23**

WHERE: Lincoln Center

FEE: \$6 residents/\$9 nonresidents

INFO: Visit www.highlandparks.org or call (219) 838-0114.

CHICAGO BULLS ACADEMY

Improve every aspect of your basketball game including ball handling, shooting, passing and individual offensive moves.

WHEN: **JULY 30** to **AUGUST 3**

ROOKIES: 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.

VETERANS: 1 to 4 p.m.

WHERE: Lincoln Center Fieldhouse

FEE: \$199 per player

APPLICATIONS: Available at Lincoln Center and www.bullssoxacademy.com

INFO: Call (630) PLAYBAL.

ROTARY CORN ROAST

Join us for all the corn you care to eat. The roast includes corn, hot dog or sausage, sauerkraut, dessert and beverage.

WHEN: 4 to 7:30 p.m. **AUGUST 3**

WHERE: Main Square Park

FEE: \$6 in advance at Cakes By Karen, Lincoln Center and the Highland Chamber office; \$8 at the park.

INFO: Call (219) 923-3666.